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Approved For Release 2005/11/28 : CIA-RDP91-00901R000700080047-5

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(WALTERS)

ATLANTA (UPI) -- THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE CIA SAID TODAY CRITICS OF CIA ACTIVITIES ARE DIVERTING ATTENTION FROM THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY AND PLAYING UPON AN AMERICAN TENDENCY TO "FLAGELLATE OURSELVES AS A PEOPLE".

LT. GEN. VERNON WALTERS SAID "THE REAL ISSUE" IS NOT THE TRUTH OR UNTRUTH OF CHARGES THE CIA KEPT SECRET FILES ON AMERICANS AND PLOTTED THE DEMISE OF GOVERNMENTS ABROAD.

"THE REAL ISSUE BEFORE US TODAY IS: WILL THE UNITED STATES HAVE EYES AND EARS, OR WILL IT STUMBLE INTO THE FUTURE -- A BLIND AND DEAF GIANT, UNTIL THE DAY IT HAS TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ABJECT HUMILIATION AND NUCLEARR BLACKMAIL," WALTERS TOLD THE ATLANTA ROTARY CLUB.

WALTERS SAID, "ALL TOO OFTEN, WE SPEND OUR TIME FLAGELLATING OURSELVES AS A PEOPLE, POINTING OUT OUR OWN MISTAKES, POINTING OUT OUR OWN SHORTCOMINGS, POINTING OUT ALL THE TERRIBLE THINGS WEVE DONE."

HE SAID HIS FORMER BOSS, EX-CIA DIRECTOR RICHARD HELMS, ORDERED AGENTS IN 1972 NEVER EVEN TO CONSIDER ASSASSINATION AS A MEANS OF ELIMINATING TROUBLESOME OPPOSITION IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT CIA CRITICS ARE ATTACKING THE AGENCY NOW FOR EVENTS THAT OCCURRED 10 TO 15 YEARS AGO.

"TIMES CHANGE," SAID WALTERS. "AT THE TIME PEOPLE WERE TALKING ABOUT FIDEL CASTRO, HE WAS SHOOTING PEOPLE IN THE NATIONAL STADIUM, IN FRONT OF THE TELEVISION CAMERAS."

WALTERS DID NOT SAY SPECIFICALLY THAT THOSE WHO WANTED TO KILL CASTRO WERE CIA AGENTS OR HAD THE AGENCYS SUPPORT.

UPI 87-07 05:54 PED

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